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ABSTRACT

Differences between freshman expectations at the University of Maryland in 1968 and 1969 were assessed using data from College and University Environment Scales (CUES). Two editions of CUES have been published. CUES I consists of 150 statements about university life that help to define the atmosphere of the institution as seen by the student. The five scales are practicality, community, awareness, propriety, and scholarship. CUES II includes four major changes: (1) the norms are based on a larger sample; (2) the items that had best discriminated between institutions were kept while others were eliminated; (3) new items were introduced in an attempt to keep pace with changing trends; and (4) two new scales were added (campus morale) and (quality of teaching/faculty-student relationships). During the summer of 1969 CUES I was administered to 484 students and CUES II was administered to 593 students who were entering the university. Large changes were recorded from 1968 to 1969 on three of the five scales in CUES I: awareness, propriety, and scholarship. A stress on self, society, and intellectual discipline is expected to be less important by the 1969 incoming freshmen, while caution and thoughtfulness are expected to be more evident. Only on the propriety scale did the CUES II results differ from the CUES I results. It is concluded that "propriety" as measured by CUES II is something different from "propriety" as measured by CUES I. (SW)

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UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND

College Park, Maryland

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN FRESHMAN EXPECTATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND IN 1968 AND 1969

Stephen P. Nault and William E. Sedlacek

Research Report # 15-70

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Summary

Incoming freshmen responded to the College and University Environment Scales (CUES) during the 1969 summer orientation in terms of their expectations of the University of Maryland. A profile of expectations was formed using both CUES I (N=484) and CUES II (N=593). The data were analyzed to determine the relationships between the CUES I results and the CUES II results and between the 1968 results and the 1969 results.

Large changes were recorded from 1968 to 1969 on three of the five scales in CUES I - Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship. A stress on self, society, and intellectual discipline is expected to be less important by the 1969 incoming freshmen, while caution and thoughtfulness are expected to be more evident.

Only on the Propriety scale did the CUES II results differ from the CUES I results. It is concluded that "Propriety" as measued by CUES II is something different from "Propriety" as measured by CUES I.

Researchers have used various methods to describe the differences among college environments. These include demographic studies, studies of student body composition, behavior studies, and studies of perceived environment. Into this last category falls the College & University Environment Scales (CUES).

Two editions of CUES have been published . CUES I consists of 150 statements about university life that help to define the atmosphere of the institution as seen by the student. The student is directed to decide if each statement is generally true or false about his school . It is divided into five scales that reflect the areas in which college and university environments were found to differ: Practicality, Community, Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship. Appendix A defines each of these scales.

CUES II is similar to CUES I but includes four major changes: (1) the norms in CUES II are based on a larger sample; (2) the items that had best discriminated between institutions were kept while others were eliminated; (3) new items were introduced in an attempt to keep pace with changing trends; (4) two new scales were added - (Campus Morale) and (Quality of Teaching/Faculty-Student relationships).

This survey of collective perceptions assumes that the environment is what the people who live in it perceive it to be. "Even if one grants the possibility of self-deception on a large scale, the perceived reality, whatever it is, influences one's behavior and response. Thus, realisitically, what people think is true is true for them." (Pace, 1967, p7)

During the freshman orientation program of 1968, CUES I was administered at the University of Maryland and Lynch and Sedlacek (1969a) reported the

results. By giving the CUES to incoming freshmen who had not yet attended the University, these researchers were able to obtain a measure of expectations of the University. This study found that "Maryland looks, to these students, much the same as other campuses look to their incoming freshmen ..." (Lynch and Sedlacek, 1969a Summary). During their second semester, these same freshmen responded to CUES I again, giving a measure of their perceptions of the University (Chapman & Sedlacek, 1969). These perceptions were found to be closer to national norms than the expectations previously reported. The perceptions of the University of members of the student affairs staff were also measured, using CUES I, by Lynch and Sedlacek (1969 b). Research at other institutions using CUES has indicated that upperclassmen differ from freshmen and that faculty members differ from both of these in their perceptions of the college or university environment (Pace, 1966).

The purpose of this study was to examine differences between incoming student perceptions of the University in 1968 and 1969.

Method

During the summer of 1969 CUES I and CUES II were administered to samples of 484 and 593, respectively, of the entering freshmen attending the University of Maryland orientation program. The students were directed to respond to the CUES items in terms of what they <u>expected</u> the University of Maryland to be like.

The results of the administration of CUES were scored in three ways: (a) mean scores; (b) "66+" method; (c) "66+/33-" method. Percentile equivalents are also presented to enable comparisons to be made between CUES I and CUES II and to the data obtained in 1968 by Lynch and Sedlacek.

The 66+ method of scoring is a technique of scoring often used in opinion polling. A ratio of 2:1 is arbitrarily chosen as a minimum level of consensus necessary to call an item "characteristic" of the institution. This calls for a 66%/33% split or greater. The number of items in a scale answered in the keyed direction of 66% or more of the students is the score obtained on that scale by the University.

The 66+/33- method takes into account the possibility of a negative consensus of 2:1 or greater. Starting with the 66+ score, the number of items answered in the keyed direction by 33% or fewer of the students is subtracted. (A more detailed description of these scoring procedures may be found in Pace, 1969).

Graphic comparisons were made by t tests for differences between years and by percentile data based on the 66+ and 66+/33- methods in comparing CUES I and CUES II.

Results

1968 data compared to 1969 data: Table 1 shows that the expectations of the University of Maryland freshmen did not change from 1968 on the Practicality and Community scales. However, the differences on Awareness, Propriety and Scholarship were all significant at the .01 level. The expectations reported in 1969 also differed from the expectations of the national norm group reported by Pace (1966). Here mean scores are used for comparison.

CUES I compared to CUES II: A comparison of the CUES I and CUES II data obtained from entering freshmen in the summer of 1969 is presented in Figure 1. Percentile data is used here to enable a comparison between the two instruments.

There were no significant differences (.05 level) on any scale except Propriety. Propriety as measured by CUES II was significantly higher than Propriety as measued by CUES I.

Discussion

The study had two objectives: (1) to see if student expectations of the University of Maryland had changed from 1968 to 1969; and (2) to see if CUES I and CUES II yield the same results for the University of Maryland.

Student expectations had changed from 1968 to 1969 on three of the five scales that compose CUES I. Using the descriptions of the five scales given by Pace, (1963, pp. 24-25), these changes can be seen as reflecting a change away from a concern with self-understanding, reflectiveness, and identity in the student expectations. A stress on self, society, and esthetics is still greatly expected, but less so than the previous year. Propriety is the only dimension that was seen to increase. The atmosphere is expected to be more mannerly, considerate, and proper than it was the year before. The freshmen expect an academic, scholarly environment at the University of Maryland; however, expectations have decreased between 1968 and 1969. Intellectual speculation, an interest in ideas as ideas, knowledge for its own sake, and intellectual discipline are all expected to be less characteristic of the University in 1969.

Some expectations did not change. In 1969 as reported of 1968 by Lynch and Sedlacek (1969, Summary):

> Freshmen expect that at the University of Maryland, procedures, personal status, and practical benefits are slightly important; that order and supervision are somewhat characteristic and that some status is gained by doing what is expected. They anticipate a slightly friendly, cohesive, and group-centered campus, with a moderately congenial atmosphere.

The differences between the two years are so large as to force one to wonder how the University could have changed that much in a single year. It seems improbable that it has. The most parsimonious explanation is that the samples were not comparable to one another, although the groups were drawn similarly, and each represented a reasonable cross-section of entering freshmen. Additionally, the CUES is designed to yield similar results regardless of the other characteristics of students.

Another possible explanation is that the standards against which the students are comparing the University of Maryland are changing more rapidly than is the University itself. In particular, the responses given to CUES items are never absolutes. The responses call for personal opinions. In answering, the student must repond relative to some standard he has established. Since most students have not attended any other colleges or universities, the only standards they have available to them are what they have "heard" about other campuses. The news media are keeping the populace well informed as to what is happening of a revolutionary or violent nature on campuses all over the country. It is probably these news media presentations that the incoming freshmen are comparing to the University of Maryland.

In particular, the years 1968 and 1969 have seen increasing amounts of unrest on university campuses. This increased unrest "there" while none was observed "here" may well be responsible for the huge changes measured by CUES I Support is given to this hypothesis by the fact that the scales that are changed are those most directly related to campus unrest - Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship.

Just what CUES measures is therefore in question. It does not, in any absolute sense, measure the campus. Rather it measures an interaction of

what the student thinks the campus is like and what the student knows about other campuses. CUES scores would be expected to change even if the University remains constant if what the student knows about other institutions changes. But in a period of apparent rapid change in University and college environment, the CUES may be useful only as an historical measure and of little use in predicting the future environment.

Whatever it is that CUES I is measuring, CUES II is measuring the same thing. On six of the seven scales, the percentile scores yielded by CUES II were the same as those given by CUES I This is to be expected since the items on CUES II that are used in calculating the scale scores are all taken from CUES I None of the new items added to CUES II are used in forming the scores. However, it does appear likely that the Propriety scale of CUES II measures something different than the Propriety scale on CUES I.

Conclusions

There is some doubt as to what the CUES is measuring. In all fairness to Pace, he did not devise the scale to measure expectations but rather actual perception. Expectations may simply be less stable than perception of the environment.

Another difficulty is that confusion occurs as to what CUES is supposed to measure. Often people believe that CUES is attempting to measure characteristics of the university rather than characteristics of the university environment. The distinction is most clear on the Scholarship scale. A low CUES score on scholarship does not mean that the institution has low scholarship. It means instead that the general feeling on campus is that scholarship is relatively unimportant on that campus.

There seems little doubt that CUES I and CUES II are measuring the same thing. Since CUES II does it more efficiently than does CUES I (it uses 100 items to measure what CUES I takes 150 items to measure), there would seem to be little value in the continued use of CUES I - especially in the light of the greater data available on the reliability of CUES II .

Many uses for CUES remain unexplored. The measurement of faculty perception is a logical next step. Student affairs administrators have given their perceptions of the University of Maryland and an "ideal" institution (Lynch and Sedlacek, 1969 b). This same format could be followed with other groups. Additionally, with the unrest that took place during the spring of 1970, it may be that students now perceive the environment of the University differently. Measuring the extent and direction of the changes may prove fruitful.

Table 1.

Mean Differences Between the University of Maryland 1968 and 1969 and National Norms on CUES Expectations as Measured by CUES I

Scale	National Norm Expectations	U. of Md. 1968 Expectations	1968 S.D.	U. of Md. 1969 Expectations	1969 S.D.	t (1968 vs.1969)
Practicality	15.2	17.77	3.07	17.96	3.17	.18
Community	20.5	19.87	4.21	21.43	4.56	1.22
Awareness	20.5	24.11	4.45	19.60	4.16	3.27**
Propriety	13.4	13.59	4.55	24.15	4.68	8.87**
Scholarship	22.4	22.53	4.12	11.98	3.80	9.02**

** Significant at .01 level

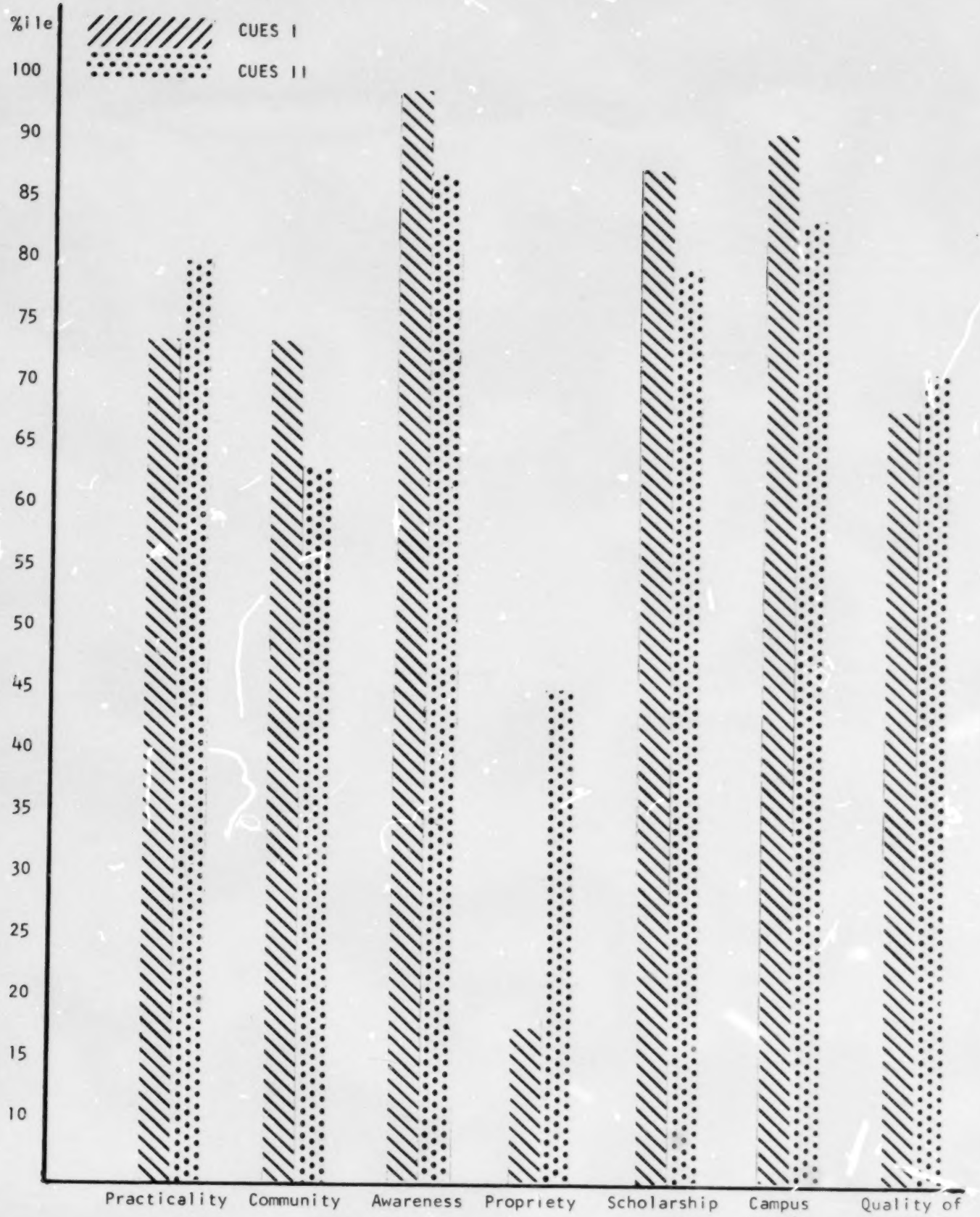

Figure 1 Percentile Comparison of CUES I and CUES II Scores, U. of Md., 1969
Percentiles shown are from Pace, (1969).

Appendix A

INTERPRETATION OF CUES SCALES

1. Practicality: To what extent does the campus atmosphere emphasize the concrete and realistic rather than the abstract and speculative? A high score indicates that organization, system and procedure are important, as well as status and practical benefit. Also, order and supervision are characteristic of the administration and of the classwork.

2. Community: Is the environment cohesive and supportive? Does a concern for group welfare and a feeling of group loyalty pervade the campus? High scores indicate a supportive and sympathetic environment; low scores suggest one where privacy is important and detachment prevalent.

3. Awareness: How much concern is there for self-understanding and identity? How much active interest is there in a wide range of esthetic forms? How pronounced is personal involvement with the world's problems and the condition of man?

4. Propriety: Decorum, politeness, consideration, thoughfulness and caution are elements of this scale. A low score would indicate an atmosphere that is relatively demonstrative and assertive, more free-wheeling than polite and mannerly.

5. Scholarship: This scale reflects interest in scholarship, in academic achievement and competition for it. High scores indicate emphasis upon intellectual speculation, interest in ideas as ideas and in the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake.

Source: Pace, Robert C. Comparisons of CUES results from different groups of reporters. Educational Testing Service, 1967.

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